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NO: 628, October 22, 9 p.m.

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ACTION DEPARTMENT 628, INFORMATION PARIS 46, ROME 34, ANKARA, NICOSIA, THESSALONIKI UNNUMBERED

PARIS FOR USRO, BURNS AND JAMES

ROME FOR BURRIS

With Greek election date a fortnight away and campaign well underway, Caramanlis who has been traveling through the provinces would seem to be drawing crowds equaling those of 1961. He is described as confident, but his campaign gives impression of being rather lackluster to date, and consensus most observers (including some in ERE) is that present outlook for ERE vote is perhaps somewhat below 1961 peak of 50.7 percent. In light of the vagaries of the electoral law current political discussion centers on question whether ERE will have enough seats above 150 to constitute working majority alone.

With Markezinis Progressives running separately from CU this year, degree of support to be shown Markezinis on election day remains important question mark. While crowds attending Markezinis speeches substantial and his campaign, which calls for serious approach to country's problems, appeals to many by its avoidance polemics, there are those who believe Markezinis will garner small vote on election day due to philosophy that vote for Progressives will be lost vote. Nevertheless, some people estimate that Markezinis may get five to eight percent of vote and with it up to ten seats in Parliament. Others

/give him

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Control: 17539

Rec'd: October 22, 1963
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-2- 628, October 22, 9 p.m., from Athens

give him one or two percent of total vote and only a seat or two.

Center Union is running hard, with Papandreou full of enthusiasm and optimism and Venizelos concentrating on Crete. Campaign has received unexpected fillip from rather vituperative statements in Caramanlis speeches and also by emphasis being given by Caramanlis to amending constitution, without specifying changes he has in mind. Center Union reaction to this has been to adopt rather more moderate line. Nevertheless, Center Union continues sharp in criticism Caramanlis domestic and foreign (including Cyprus and Balkan) policies. Center Union also using Caramanlis desire amend constitution to imply dictatorial designs on his part. Furthermore, Center Union buoyed by large and enthusiastic turnout for Papandreou at Thessaloniki October 13. It appears possible, therefore, that Center Union may gain several points over 33.6 percent of total vote in 1961, provided Markezinis who ran with them does not make substantial inroads into Center Union on election day. In any event Center Union seems unlikely to fall below 1961 total, since it may make some inroads into EDA and ERE vote, particularly in cities and towns.

EDA for its part is bolstering its standard slogans with stress on Lambrakis affair. However, total EDA vote difficult to predict since lost vote philosophy may apply here. Furthermore, EDA leadership divided on dialectic problems and over whether to support EDA candidates only or to cast support in some areas to other candidates in opposition to ERE. EDA leaders are reportedly scaling down their own estimates below the 20 percent which was generally accepted by observers several weeks ago, fearing some loss of vote to the Center.

Foregoing are best estimates as of this moment but in view of mercurial Greek political scene any guesses made a fortnight ahead are hazardous. Final week of campaign with major rallies scheduled in Athens can prove decisive.

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